294 end in a knot (2). Twelve such longitudinal braids are placed

2. In braiding, one frequently greases his fingers and twists the strips slightly.

close to one another. The space between these and the edge of the cap is filled by pigtails made in the same way but running at right angles to the others; at the edge they are covered by three rows of pigtails all the way around and are sewed to the hide. /179/ For this one requires a needle made of bark, whose tip has been hardened in the fire and whose other end has a slit for the fiber thread. The pigtails jutting out over the edge are cut off. A fringe (mbɔ̄m), made of a piece of raffia pith, is put over the crown of the cap. The piece of pith is cut into on both its narrow sides so that it will bend more readily, and over it is sewn a piece of material on which is set a stirrup of the same width, made of palm strips and studded with brass nails -- these stirrups have been described above in connection with the inner surface of the cap. On either side of the fringe there are a few longitudinal rows of red beads strung on raffia fiber. Another decoration on the caps consists of pieces of leather sewn on at the sides, which have cowrie shells or white buttons stitched on them and from which are hung tassels of pineapple strings strung with beads (see Fig. 118, foreground).

The ornamental caps of the Fang are not made of hides but of palm strips, parallel to each other, which are braided with blackened Triumfetta fiber in such a way that one strip is always skipped, and thus a chessboard pattern is created.

302 Older people for the most part do not wear bead ornaments in their hair -- insofar as they still have any -- but on the contrary wear simpler hair arrangements which, incidentally, are supposed to have been more fashionable at one time.

291 Among head coverings we need only mention caps made from the hide of monkeys, civet cats, or of the ichneumon, Bdeogale nigripes Puch., as well as imported red caps which are worn by chiefs and other elderly "notables." Hats made from leaves of grass (Paspalum) sewn together resemble our ordinary straw hats in shape

The stool is a valuable piece of household furniture, a luxury object, for which the natives are willing to spend some money. For this reason its manufacture is an important branch of wood carving, and the makers of well-finished, artistically decorated stools are famous persons, much in demand. If they wanted to, they could make a considerable amount of money with their art, and they also could elevate the art itself, but with their congenital laziness, a special inducement is always required before they will take the trouble to start a new project. For example, a guest in the house of such an artist sees a beautifully carved stool there and says: "Oh, what a beautiful stool; you could make me one like that." Perhaps others have uttered the same wish, and so the artist finally pulls himself together, goes into the jungle, and cuts down a trunk of the Apocynacea Alstonia congensis Engl. (ekūk), the only tree suitable for the manufacture of stools. He must choose a trunk which -- after the bark has been pulled off -- has the same diameter as the proposed stool /221/ (Fig. 172). He takes the trunk with him to the village and cuts it into about five to seven disks as thick as the stool is intended to be tall. Then with his cutlass he draws a line around approximately the middle, and this line indicates the lower edge of the seat. From there he cuts three radial grooves downward, deepens them with an adz (ngbwák IV), Figure 173, and in this way forms three legs. Then the seat is made smooth and held over the fire until it becomes nice and brown. The edge is rubbed clean with the rough leaves of the Ficus exasperata Vahl (ekōkō' Fang, akō Ntum) (1). The edge and the

1. Root kō, "to rub"; compare a-kō-k, "grindstone."

legs are colored with redwood and dried for an hour in the sun; finally they are decorated with carved patterns, an artistic addition which is not everywhere uniformly successful. /Fig. 172 appears here in the original text./

Ordinarily a stool maker finishes from two to three pieces in one day. The price is so low (two spears, the equivalent of 14 pfennigs, apiece) that it is difficult to conceive how the man can work for it.

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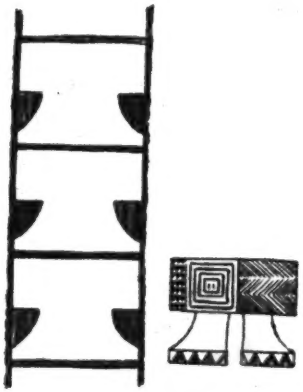

Fig. 172. Stages in Making a Stool.

322 The explanation lies in a kind of principle of reciprocity, a princi-
476 ple clearly stated in the educational precepts to be discussed in a
435 later section /Ed., Vol II/, that is, the seller counts upon the fact that later he will need his client who is in turn a specialist in the manufacture of some kind of article (basketwork plates, for instance), and he then expects to be treated in the same lenient manner. As a result of the excessive division of labor, everyone [463] is dependent upon everyone else, and this dependence keeps the prices down. Wherever this dependence is absent, the prices go up. Europeans, for instance, with whom such a silent agreement does not exist, pay considerably more, ten or twenty times more, and at the same time they have to put up with inferior work as well.

322 Moreover, the sale of objects manufactured for household use
434 is not regarded as an enterprise for profit. When I asked a stool
554 maker whom I [illegible] befriended what his business brought in, he first

[412]

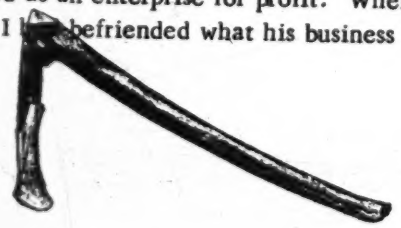

Fig. 173. Adz.

322 434 554 had to ponder for a long time and finally said that every month he made about ten stools for two spears (14 pfennigs) apiece, and that he therefore earned 20 spears (1.40 marks); with this income, he said, he had /Fig. 173 appears here in the original text/ bought brass ornaments for himself, and the rest he had put aside as marriage money, but that did not bother him since he considered his art a matter of honor. /222/

322 415 The manufacture of stirring spoons (mbŏ̄b) is, like their form, fairly simple. From a tree trunk (1) a flat piece of wood is cut out

[824]

1. The following three trees are used: Alchornea caloneura Pax (ndămabā̤ III); Hasskarlia didymostemon Baill. (efŭ̄ŏ́le Ntum, dzĭ́ III, nyṓ̤le III); and Kickxia elastica Preuss (emvila).

and crudely cut to shape with a bush knife. Then the spoon is hollowed out in the following manner. A chisel (ojĕn), Figure 174, and a simple heavy piece of wood for a hammer are used to make a transverse groove between bowl and handle, and the wood is removed piece by piece by blows aimed at it. The more delicate work is done by shaving with a chisel or knife. The finished spoon is usually rubbed with redwood. The people themselves do not know why this is done. In answer to my question, my friend Nto-Ndanga offered the following remark by way of an answer: "Look here, I am a Black myself, but the Blacks have no sense. I have long asked myself why the stirring spoons are rubbed with redwood because that way dirt (that is, the redwood) gets into the food!" The various forms of the stirring spoon are shown in Figure 98.

Somewhat more effort is required to make the ladling spoons (tōk), Figure 175. They are made primarily from the wood of the [824] Carpodinus tessmannii Gilg (ebắm), more rarely from the Kickxia elastica Preuss (emvila). A block of wood in the shape of a cylinder halved lengthwise is taken from the timber and cut into the shape of the spoon by means of careful, layer by layer removal of the wood [442] (see Fig. 176), first with the cutlass (a), then with the adz (b). The bowl is then further hollowed out with the spoon scraper (fŏ́nege-tōk). Figure 177.

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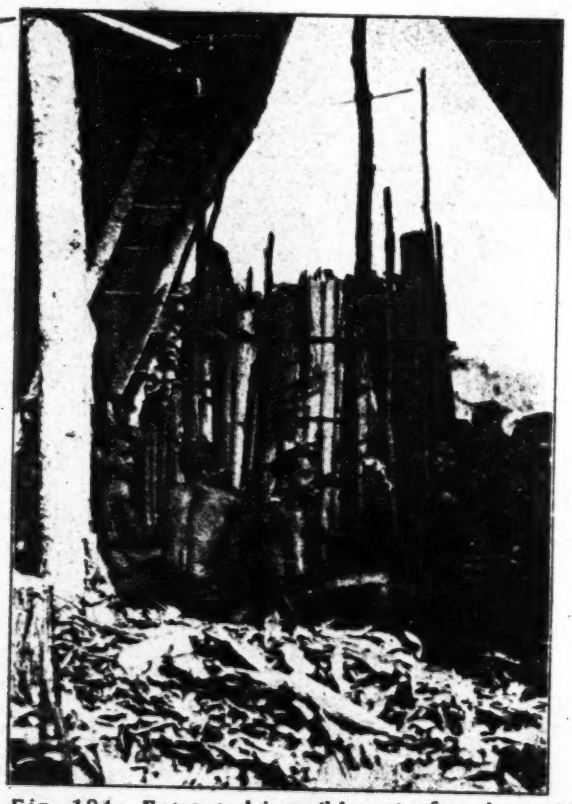

Fig. 184. Extracted iron (bloom) after the smelting furnace has been torn down, Bébai (Schumu Family).

326
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The Pangwe do not accord the smith an exceptional social position. He is neither despised, as he is by many tribes, nor does he enjoy any kind of privileges or respect beyond the regard for his abilities. His skill (akŏ'n) is recognized and placed above that of other artisans, but nothing more than that. The smith, like the wood carvers, works only now and then at his trade, and only when there is a need for him to do so; he never works to build up a stock. In other words, he does not carry on a regular trade; instead, he works by commission and is paid for the work performed, not for the finished product (everybody must bring the smith the iron needed for the desired objects). At the time I was in the country, the smith received, for example, for the manufacture of spear money, ten per cent of its value.

424 because, in spite of the great love for children, in spite of the
759 intimate relationship between father and son, the Negro is simply
461 not able to endure the effort of working unless the prospect of
payment is constantly before his eyes. The price for strangers,
[435] to be paid in advance, is 100 spears or a small sheep, in return
for which the medicine man will teach his pupil all the cures
that he knows.

The medicine men do not have any special social status,
759 authority, or influence. In general, they are regarded only as
554 experienced and skillful persons (akǒ́n, i.e., "skillful"). Only
754 those among them who know the medicines of sorcery and give
this knowledge to others (including the cult leaders who, by
means of a magic medicine, give the cult figures the power to
practice sorcery) are feared, and rightly so, because one suspects
that with the help of these "medicines" they may practice sorcery,
i.e., kill other people, at any time.

1. Medicines for Sorcery

We have seen in the previous chapter /Ed., not translated/
754 that the sources of belief in sorcery are to be sought in the need
[753] to assign causes for unrecognized internal ailments, particularly
malaria and poisoning. Because of the similarity of their symp-
toms, these two cannot be distinguished by European outsiders,/145/
and even the native inhabitants for the most part find it impossible.
At the moment, therefore, it is not possible to obtain a clear
picture of these things. It is certain that the Negroes know how to
get someone out of the way with poison and that they mix poison
with the conscious intention of killing, but it is uncertain to what
extent they are conscious of the physiological effects of poison in
our sense. As far as I could observe, a generally mystical view of
these matters still prevails. All poisoning, just like all internal
illness, is sorcery, and all sorcery is the mystical operation of the
physical being, detached from the body, that finds its strength
in its ewu which has been developed through medicine (see Sec-
tion 12)/Ed., not translated/. If someone wishes to kill a person

171 Moral /Anthropophyteia, Yearbooks for Folkloristic Inquiries and Explorations into the Historical Development of Sexual Morality/, edited by Dr. Friedrich S. Krauss (1912), Vol. 9, p. 31.

833 Over against the great mass of women, the bebŏbǎ́ń, who
777 through sexual intercourse bring the man misfortune, there is the exceptional phenomenon of the woman who among the Ntum is called ayŭē′ III and among the Fang ayă̄. Union with her brings both parties, the woman as well as the man, good fortune. At the same time her influence is more important for the man, for instance, during military and hunting expeditions. If, for instance, the man goes hunting on the day after having had intercourse with such a woman, he is bound to see a wild animal soon and to kill it. If he goes to war, "his rifle will hit its mark," whereas the enemy's will not. For this eventuality, moreover, he has the woman give him a medicine, namely red wood that she has ground in a certain way (bā-ayâ, mfumu-bā). The woman, too, is lucky on this day if she goes "hunting" for fish, that is, if she goes on a fish drive (a lŭ́k), or works on the farm (see Vol. I, p. 56).

But -- as was said -- such women who bring good fortune are a rarity; the majority of women bring misfortune. If a man goes hunting on the day after coition, all the animals evade him in a wide arc (a bắń), hence the name ebŏbǎ́ń.

[833] In the peculiar custom of the miă̄k consecration I see proof of
785 the fact that the Pangwe know the harmful effect of excessive sexual
● 554 intercourse. The word miă̄k actually means the castrated animal,
831 in particular the buck goat (see Vol. I, p. 76), and here it is applied symbolically to a person who through a public and solemn declaration is for a time excluded from sexual intercourse. After a successfully concluded war, more rarely upon some other occasion, somebody (usually the chief) decides to consecrate his son or his daughter to purity. Naturally, neither of the latter may as yet be acquainted with sexual matters, in other words, they will only be

785 554 831 from four to six years old. They are thus consecrated so that one day they will surpass all others in insight and understanding; then, through their spiritual superiority, they will acquire influence, power (knowledge is power!), and especially wealth. In the case of the son, this will be to his own advantage; in the case of the daughter, it will benefit the father who can get a higher purchase price for her than for a girl with the usual loose way of life. In other words, the "savages" know well the value of moral purity. /269/

831 785 [184] [171] The custom of mĭ̆k consecration was formerly practiced throughout the Pangwe region. Nowadays, however, since warlike times have ceased, it is to be encountered only among the Fang of the central Uelle region. I should like to compare the custom to the practice found among us during the Middle Ages, whereby the heads of important families (especially princes), after some lucky success (for instance, in war), destined one child for the clergy and consecrated it to the pure life dedicated to God, frequently not without calculating the advantages that could accrue to them from such an action.

785 789 556 831 [824] The procedure of the consecration feast is as follows. The child, clothed in a small loincloth, is led to the medicine man and is washed by him with a medicine water. The medicines used for this are barks of various trees that bear ample fruit, such as the Pseudospondias microcarpa (Rich.) Engl. (ofŏs), so that the child's understanding may bear fruit as abundantly as these trees or, in other words, so that wealth may fall to its lot in the same abundance as the fruit of these trees falls to the ground beneath them. The various barks are placed in a container made of banana leaves, and hot water is poured over them. After the ablution, the child must swallow the principal medicine, a bundle of ngon [824] with the chopped leaves of certain "weak" plants, such as Hibiscus moschatus (Roxb.) (tége [illegible] from a tĕk, "weak," because [833] the fruit is cooked in a short time), in order to make the child equally weak, that is, sexually incapable. Furthermore, the ngon [825] is mixed with chicken meat -- the chicken is the bird of day, of the good and the pure, and at the same time it is supposed to point symbolically to the wealth that is desired for the child (the chief, the "Very Rich One," is regarded as the privileged son of the

612 belonging to the clan of the father or the mother (or belonging to a clan connected by marriage to either when the common origin is still known). We have already pointed out certain circumstances in which maternal kinship is effective. It should be remembered that this maternal kinship manifests itself from childhood on by obligating the mwanõ kal to visit his nya-nduma(s), that it is able to receive the right of guardianship, to collect the bride price, and to benefit from an inheritance (in addition to compensation normally provided at the time of a maternal nephew's death) by substituting for a vanished paternal kinship, and that it shares along with the relatives by marriage (abè) in the various phases of funeral ceremonies and mourning. This fact suggests that the power of the maternal kinship, while remaining subordinate, is recognized in this way to strengthen the power of "alliances" created by marriage. Those related to the father by marriage are the nya-nduma of his immediate descendants. In this way the bonds essential to the existence of traditional Fang society are consolidated.

Marriage and Alliances

581 554 The first explorers, Du Chaillu and M. H. Kingsley, did not fail to point out the important role of relations set up by means of the numerous marriages among foreign groupings. Father Trilles, in his study made at the beginning of this century, also pointed out the personal advantages connected with a network [119] of alliances opened up through the interplay of marriages. He writes: "The Fang will therefore marry a girl in order to secure alliances in other tribes, to acquire greater influence by having more men attached to him by the ties of blood." (1) All researchers emphasize definitely

1. Father Trilles, "Proverbes, légendes et contes Fang [Fang Sayings, Legends and Tales]," Bulletin de la Société Neuchâteloise de Géographie, 1905, pp. 49-295.

two social consequences of marriage: the increase of personal prestige and the increase of the strength of the family group.

581 554 These facts should be complemented by specifying the particular 562 value attributed by every Fang to the "possession" of several wives

581 and by recalling the keen competition for women this society. This
554 value was expressed in a colorful way by Dr. Cureau when he said:
562 "The gynaeceum is a bank, a savings bank...." (2) And M. L. Mba,

2. Dr. A. Cureau, op. cit., p. 118.

a Fang of the Libreville region, in his Coutumier Pahouin [Pahuin Customs] gives a similar interpretation: the wife "is part of the property (or bioum) of the group into which she enters by marriage." [837] He completes this interpretation by saying that the adultery of a married woman "is severely punished because it is considered a theft." (3) The woman has no juridical personality: she has no

3. In the same vein, we cite a remark, quoted by Mgr. Martrou in a study dated 1918, made by a young Fang of Libreville to his wife: "What do you have to complain of, you are my beast ... I paid a high enough price for you!"

personal property of any importance, merely goods for everyday use; she has no share in any inheritance; she is transmitted by inheritance, just as are various goods and valuables (which may be considered virtually as women). However, the woman is property of a special kind; she is property in the highest sense of the word: creative capital. [She is the] source of produce (by her agricultural function, all the more important now that the woman takes part in cultivating the rich plantations) and of service (by her various domestic functions). [She is the] source of power, by "the procreation of children contributing to the defense of the group or securing alliances," (4) and [she is the source] of personal prestige.

4. L. Mba, op. cit., p. 29.

[She is the] source of "alliances" and kinship; through her the number of people who exchange services and gifts and who can render aid and assistance is increased. Thus, marriage has a

581 specific social meaning; it creates bonds (abè) which fasten together
554 the family and clan groupings. Curault points out that this imposes
562 a "close union, in spite of divergencies in language and in spite of the palavers of the different parts of the Pahouin people." At the same time, marriage [120] has a personal meaning. In traditional
[556] Fang society the possession of many wives is the principal sign of wealth and the condition for all increase of wealth. This wealth conditions the importance of the social role; it makes possible the acquisition of a kind of personal power in a society with hardly any hierarchical system. (1)

1. Let us point out that two words with the same root, éval and évala, mean "polygamy" and "a prop, a support," respectively.

836 Because of this personal element the competition for women can become particularly keen. Very early, government reports pointed out the frequency of palavers due to the "women question," and they continue to complain of them as being characteristic of "Fang society and psychology." Let us state at the outset that the competition does not concern the sexual services demanded from the woman. For the unmarried men there are various compensating possibilities -- but only in the line of "lustful sexuality," to quote the expression of R. Bastide. (2) The young unmarried people have

2. R. Bastide, Sociologie et Psychanalyse [Sociology and Psychoanalysis], Bibliothèque de Sociologie Contemporaine, Paris, 1950.

complete sexual liberty among themselves: it is the custom called azɔ̀ya-angɔ̀n (azɔ̀ya, fornication; ngɔ̀n, maiden). E. Trezenem states in his monograph on the Fang of the Ogooué that "virginity of the woman is considered of no importance," that "the young
836 girls are free to give themselves to whomever they want." Then
584 he adds an "important restriction," saying that there are practically

62 57 614 all future progress to the extent to which it allows (or does not allow) the maintenance of sufficiently large and stable village units.

Political Authority and Judicial Authority

●554 622 Taking Fang society as an example, Dr. Cureau speaks of "a phenomenon of a stretching ... of the social bloc into a hierarchy based either on filiation or on intellectual and particularly moral superiority, both of which principles have their practical value according to the times." (1) He insists on a fact we have

1. Work already quoted, p. 332.

pointed out, the lack of a hierarchical organization, [with only] the simple existence of pre-eminences. The language itself gives [194] proof of this fact by not having a special word to designate the chief, using ésa when the pre-eminence is in a way genealogical, nkuma when it is based on wealth, ẓoé (from ẓu, to say) when it justified by eloquence and the ability to command. By magnifying this statement, A. Cureau contrasts the Fang groupings with those of other peoples as being "anarchical tribes" as opposed to "organized tribes." He writes: "Authority is occasional and momentary ... Edvoughe has carried the votes in such-and-such a difficult palaver, the whole assembly obeys for a moment this ephemeral chief; tomorrow Nzokh will have succeeded Edvoughe in the leadership of opinion; here then the struggle against one and all takes place between constantly changing and constantly renewed contestants." (2)

2. Ibid., p. 326.

In a similar sense the informants of the Commission for [137] Historical Investigation assert that the chief was "in a word the one from whom the community expected the greatest services." (1)

1. Official report of the fifth session.

In the same vein there are continual complaints from administrators incapable of reviving the powerful traditional chefferies and of acting through their medium.

554 622 769 It should be noted, however, that pre-eminence "based on filiation," as Cureau puts it, is maintained without too much difficulty – being durable while power born of events is temporary – so long as the worship of ancestors by each clan fragment remains in force. Seniority determines this pre-eminence, justified and made effective by the possession of the basket containing the ancestors' skulls. This power of the "eldest," who is at the same time "first among his equals" and priest of the biéri cult organized within the cadre of "kinship," has not however allowed the implantation of effective chefferies comparable to those based on the same principles in the Ba-kongo country (2).

2. Cf., Third part of this work.

An early government report stressed the fact that one became chief, specifying that the nyamòrò (eldest) "became chief in his zone of influence when his fairness and the effectiveness of his power were recognized." (3) Thus neither the villages nor the

3. Customs regulating the attributes of chiefs and their designation in Rapport politique du Djouah [Political Report of Djouah], 1938.

localized clan fragments, nor still less the extended clan and the tribe, reveal the existence of a true hierarchy. We see the pre-eminence of the ésa (which may only be shown by some deferential attitudes) or the provisional pre-eminence of a man who has known how to expand his "zone of influence."

554 622 [7] What are the reasons for such a situation? Taking as an example Ba-kongo, which will be studied later, one sees that the fundamental social relationship is that which exists between the ancestors (masters and guardians of the sod), the land, and the lineage; it implies necessary relations between related lineages and limits the mobility of groupings. There is nothing like this in the Fang country, where the relation with land has no such importance and the whole economy, until very recently, remained oriented toward warlike and economic conquest. Even in the

554 regions where the Fang population seems relatively old, instability
622 is the rule for a large proportion of the groupings. There is thus a sort of vicious circle: mobility imposed by long-range conquest has prevented the [138] establishment of a hierarchical organization and this "lack" results in an unrestrained instability.

The social system does not show any elements favorable to a better hierarchical organization. While the pre-eminence of the eldest is accepted, that of the eldest lineage (from which, among the Ba-kongo, the "crowned chief" is selected) is barely maintained. On the contrary, we have shown that there is a nearly constant tension between this lineage and those of the "younger"
567 brothers. On the other hand, the absence of domestic slavery indicates the wish to prevent any development of inequality. During
727 the entire period of great conquests the Fang have had only two solutions in relation to conquered foreigners: to destroy or to adopt. And while the eldest appears to be the regulator of the economic and political life, and to be responsible for the worship of the ancestors, his authority is subject to an effective control. It counts only within the framework of groupings of limited extent. It is open to the criticism of the men of the nd'è bòt (who consider themselves the equal of the eldest who only acts "by delegation") or of the council members when the village contains several minor lineages. It also remains in competition with occasional authorities.

If it is true that seniority almost automatically creates authority, this authority is also limited and often threatened by the principle that "the most capable" is the most influential. In the fairly large villages, the position of chief (one should rather say the regulator and intermediary with foreign groupings, which the word ntòl specifically means) is generally passed on from eldest son to eldest son (or, in default, from eldest [son] to a younger brother on the same segment) in the lineage descended from the founder. This is on condition that the successor is approved by all "for his bravery, his wealth, and his eloquence." (1) In the opposite case, a stronger

1. L. Mba, Coutumier Pahouin [Pahouin Customs], p. 12.

personality is chosen from among the eldest of another nd'è bòt in the village. In other respects this authority is controlled by a council

554 representing not simply the various minor lineages but open to
622 competitive authorities — the best warrior (éyɔ̀nɔ̀), a rich man (nkuma), the cleverest at settling palavers (nté bété), not to mention the dignitaries of the "associations." In the traditional society, the possession of the biéri basket established the right of the eldest's pre-eminence and gave this right a sacred basis [139] it was a partial guarantee against the struggles for prestige. With the disappearance of this cult under the influence of the colonizers, the eldest must use the new "associations" or must make himself feared by having recourse to techniques of a magical order; otherwise he will find himself threatened as "chief" at the time of a competition which is implied by the Fang social logic.

554 The role of personal prestige appears clearly in studying the vocabulary, which has a considerable number of words or expressions applicable to the "important" or "honored" man: éguma (from gum, to honor), muramo(r) (t) and fâm ndêñ (from mura and ndêñ, great or important), nkurɔ̀di (very important man), mfum (well-known man, who has many relations), nkuma (already quoted, a man who is influential because of his wealth), etc. The authority acquired by such prestige limits the essential authority which we have shown to be dependent on seniority, but tradition also imposes strict restraints on it as well. Any pre-eminence acquired by virtue of purely personal merit is dangerous for the one who holds it, for it is essential that power, wealth, and wisdom be placed at the service of all members of the grouping.

554 Many early authors have pointed out the risk of displaying
578 an affluence and a prosperity that are not shared. Le Testu emphasizes the role played by "the fear of exciting jealousy": "Larger and more successful plantations, a better hut, wives that are more fertile, more prosperous affairs... each is a cause for jealousy, and the consequence of this feeling, as is often believed to be true, is the death of the one who excites it ...." (1) Similarly, M.

1. Le Testu, Le N'gwéna [The N'gwéna], Bulletin de la Société des Recherches Congolaises, Vol. 12, 1930.

554 Briault, an accurate observer of the Fang states that the death of
578 a chief, or an old man, or a notable person, is suspect and demands a much more "minute" enquiry than in the case of men of the common people." "Whoever has privileges is envied, whoever exerts authority makes malcontents; many chiefs have died unexpectedly; many who were envied have not made old bones; this must be fairly common since it is confirmed by proverbs (2)...."

2. M. Briault, Sur les pistes de l'A.E.F. [On the Trails of French Equatorial Africa], 1948, pp. 37-38, 42-43.

One might say that "intentional death" threatens (threatened rather, for colonial affairs and peace have allowed some to grow rich and to be protected) those who in their own interest disregard the fundamental solidarity and leveling tendency.

631 [140] By this play of forces, more or less antagonistic and varying according to circumstances, Fang society is protected from any excessive concentration of power. This explains why, in spite of its conquering military nature, it has never allowed even a rudimentary feudal system to appear. Strictly controlled, power was organized only at the level of small units — a village or a group of villages, relatives or neighbors. It has only exceptionally (and precariously) gone beyond the frontiers of these groupings, and as the "associations" have barely been able to remedy this deficiency, Fang society shows an absolute lack of centralization, which was a contributing factor in its rapid deterioration during the colonial period.

672 In a social system which leaves plenty of room for opposing relationships, cases of judicial action and conciliation play an important part. The Fang have not only established a classification of offenses — nté, simple disagreement; étôm, serious dis-
673 pute that might result in war; and mêm, ritual infraction —
681 and a gradation of punishments going up to holding a hostage (étéa), but have also conceived a judicial organization with

692 "arbiters" and a "jury" that has set various methods of establishing proof (including several methods of ordeal). L. Mba, in a still unpublished study, (1) points out the existence of a

1. Last part of Essai de Droit Coutumier Pahouin [Essay on Pahouin Common Law], in Rapport de la Commission Enquête Historique, Libreville, 1949.

"family tribunal" — of minor lineage — with the ntòl as peacemaker assisted by one or two members of the grouping for dealing with purely internal affairs. He also indicates the existence of a "tribunal" of major lineage that intervenes in conflicts between two or several nd'è bòt, this constituting in principle) a court of appeal, consisting of a judge (who is not necessarily the "chief" of the lineage but any peacemaker who has shown his ability) before whom the representatives of the groupings involved appear. He also points out the existence of a similarly constituted clan "tribunal," which has the same functions at the level of larger groupings and also has the role of a court of appeal. Let us add 695 that the jury (bétolò) is not selected, outside of (blood) relatives and relatives by marriage, until the day the "tribunal" meets. These are only general indications. They show, however, that it is not so much a question of organizations with a judicial function as of principles [141] assuring the regulation of infractions and conflicts by a way other than violence. The status of "judge" 693 554 does not exist with the definiteness we will find when studying the Ba-kongo; instead it displays the same weaknesses as those of the "chief's" situation. The latter may be the judge for the lineage and the clan, but he will often find himself supplanted by a true "master of palaver." In this connection ability and personal prestige are dominant to such an extent that recourse is possible to judges of foreign clans, especially in criminal matters.

692 In the matter of judiciary organization as in that of the chefferie, it appears that the framework of kinship groupings lend itself very little to a centralization of power, either political

than tribal ties. Nevertheless, politico-religious associations like the ngil did exist—very little is known about them today—which transcended clan barriers and contributed to a certain amount of tribal cohesion. On the other hand, certain individuals could have influence, sometimes authority, but never permanent command, extending beyond the limits of their clan. Usually the people involved were officers in initiation societies: the nsig nto, the Bane high judge, was probably a high-ranking initiate in the ngil. The nsɔ̂ bɔ̂t (commander of men, war leader), the évet ("capita," caravan leader), the nkukuma (1) (rico hombre, rich man)—these men on the other

1. Emphatic form of nkukum (rich).

hand had only occasional authority and that within a limited circle.

b. The Clan

I call "clan" that which the majority of the Pahouin call ayoñ (mvôg, mvôk, in certain northern tribes) (2). It is perhaps the basic

2. Cournarie, 1933, in Coutumes de Nyong et Sanaga /Customs of the Nyong and Sanaga/ points out that ayong were divided into meyom (ayom). The ayom is formed by the coming together of several mvogo who, being descended from the same ancestor, consider themselves the issue of the same mother (obligation of exogamy). Occasionally deference is paid to the mvogo most closely related to the ancestor, and its head is called ntomba or nya moto nnam or mot nnam.

The collective group may gather together: Emoi of nda bot, Ekoan of mvogo. All grown men may speak. Elders and distinguished persons then withdraw for deliberation (esok); they return to announce the decision. (J.B.)

structural unit of Pahouin society, at any rate the one the Fang of

connection that the points of the compass have a sexual implication, which is not well understood. The bilaba sets up a sort of joking relationship between the families of the participants, which may continue after their death.

The institution seems to be dying out, though it was still flourishing between the two /World?/ wars and often involved considerable amounts of money (1).

1. Balandier (no. 175 and in a personal communication) stresses the economic importance of the bilaba which, in a society without a money or trade economy, constituted one of the principal means of circulating goods and, especially, of diffusing imported commodities.

In spite of the fear his success inspires, and perhaps because of this fear, the rich man enjoyed undoubted authority in his village and sometimes beyond it. Nkukuma, the absolute form of nkukum, is used to translate "chief" (it probably means, more precisely, "person of note").

The word évet, also applied to subchiefs or government "capitas" is likewise used —a correct nuance if, as Bates says, évet is a corruption of headman applied originally to the chiefs of trade caravans. These men were chosen for their business astuteness, diplomacy, authority, and courage, but they were only deputies of a clan or village, not true political chiefs. To convey the latter implication the preferable term is still njôô bôt (Fang, nzoé mur) from jô = to say, to command, a term indicating a de facto state, /état de fait/ rather than a legal notion. It should be recalled that there were no political leaders other than the seniors, mintôl, of the extended families. Their authority was further limited by the ease with which their brothers could leave the village to establish another nearby (2).

2. But among some Pahouinized peoples the existence of royal insignia shows that chiefship /chefferie/ is an institution: among the Ewondo and Yanda the head of the clan designated his successor or, if he

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had not done so, the clan chose its chief, and the neighboring populations each sent him a spear in token of recognition.

[534]

The power of the Fong chief is on an even more personal level. The chief conveys his commands by means of an enormous drum; his pipe is preserved like a relic; his musicians play special instruments, among them the nkeñ (percussion double bell), quite rare in that region but a classical instrument in the western Cameroons with the Bamiléké or Bamoum /Mum/. The chief's installation is marked by the tradition of the spears and the donning of a headpiece of parrot plumes. (J. B.)

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Any more extensive authority was founded on personal prestige, which always aroused resentment. Authority was never conferred except temporarily, and it was quite often withdrawn from the holder before term.

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French, German, and Spanish administrations have attempted to set up a hierarchical system of authority that it has never been possible really to impose upon the country. The three administrations all made the initial mistake of trying to establish this authority on a territorial basis, which is completely—or nearly—foreign to these nomadic people. Only village chiefship had some resemblance to a customary institution, provided that the choice of chief fell upon a nnôl mot, a genuine senior, and that his brothers accepted his authority. Canton and higher chiefdoms had no cohesion except insofar as the incumbent had authority or administrative support. At the beginning of the colonial period, however, these functions were very often entrusted to genuine bejoô bôt, /62/ well-known war chiefs, high initiates of societies like the ngil, or celebrated magicians. Later on, it became more difficult to find, even among opposition ranks, chiefs possessed of real authority. After 1945 there was an attempt in the Cameroons to reorganize the system of authority on a clan basis (the Bourdier-Granier reform), then on village lines (the Christol system), finally ending up with a municipal type of system.

769 The figure was placed on the new group's first family altar, and so afterwards were the skulls of the founder and of the benya bôtô of succeeding generations. A full biéri basket was the sign of a group's
554 antiquity, which doubtless implied prestige more than genuine authority, yet nevertheless represented the nearest approach to political authority that existed in the Fang group, particularly if one takes into account the fact that officials of interclan associations were chosen from among the owners of many skulls, whence prestige extended to a large number of mvôk or meyom. The prestige of the living was exerted through the authority of the dead.

826 Skulls were, indeed, the seat or receptacle of the individual's capacity for action (we must remember that bo = to make, boo = brain), and the use of skulls in the practice of magic was not confined to ancestral skulls only: the skulls of enemies killed in battle or sacrificed in anthropophagous ceremonies before or afterward were preserved, and so were those stolen from neighbors. In the same way the skulls of the kinds of animals desired were used for hunting rites. However, it seems that a distinction was made between family skulls and outsiders' skulls, only the first having a place in the éwolé biéti and
782 appearing in family rites. The power of the skulls was increased by sprinkling them with sacrificial blood.

769 When a youth reached nya môtô age he had to learn to recognize
869 his ancestors so as to be able to ask for their help when the occasion
881 arose. Their skulls were shown to him until he could identify them individually and put them in the correct genealogical order. When
276 he was able to do this, he was given a brew of the narcotic herb alan, then spent a night in the biéti hut, facing the skulls, which had been removed from the éwolé and placed on the altar on which strongly scented plants were burned. During the night the ancestors appeared and gave him a cognomen and imposed one or more new taboos (at the same time he was relieved of certain prohibitions connected with age). Apparently it was during this initiation that his individual totem was revealed (if it was indeed a totem).

769 This question of the totem is very poorly elucidated, in spite of
614 some 600 pages devoted to the subject by Father Trilles. He dis-
114 tinguishes between clan, segment, individual, family, and society totems, etc. He also distinguishes a tutelary being, mvame, from the "effect of a tutelary being"; akam, an animal totem, from a dedicated animal or an incarnation of a man in an animal, etc. He

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

291 clothing. The Fang do not use any coverings to protect the feet. Rank is not distinguished by the dress, very often the brightest and cleanest wrappers are worn
●[554] by the young men while the *kuma* (headman) is often clothed in a dirty old rag.
[622] Very often the *kuma* wears an imported straw or felt hat obtained in trade, and this alone distinguishes him as headman of the town. Next to the possession of women and guns, a Fang man's great desire is to own "much cloth."

Personal Ornaments.

Head.—The Fang dress their hair in the same manner as the Bulu, and the
302 way they build it up on the head over wooden shapes is often very remarkable
291 and shows considerable skill. Very often the hair is built up over these shapes
301 in ridges, the upper edge of the ridge having white shirt buttons fastened along it or brass headed tacks driven in. Wigs are used and very skilfully made. Very often the term wig would be a misnomer, for the ingenious contrivance made to fit over the bald head is often entirely devoid of hair, being simply a close-fitting skull cap knitted with string made from the pineapple fibre. The wigs are usually decorated with shirt buttons or imported glass beads. The hair is frequently plaited and twisted into ringlets by both sexes; dyeing the hair is not practised. Beads and white shirt buttons are worn on the hair in large quantities, also large cowrie shells dyed with red wood powder. The beads and buttons are often sewed on pieces of goat or deer skin, a separate portion decorating each side of the head, connected by a string of beads passing across the forehead.

Moustaches are seldom cultivated, beards when worn are allowed to grow naturally; but both are frequently removed by depilation; shaving is not
301 practised. Ornaments are frequently worn in the ears, and are usually suspended by a small cord passed through a hole in the lobe. Women and young girls when returning from work in the forest or gardens frequently cluster grasses, leaves of vines and fragrant herbs around their ears; it is a rather pretty custom. Certain fetish charms are worn suspended from the ear; women frequently use for an ear fetish the small quills from a porcupine's tail, and they say it will bring them children. Brass and iron ear-rings are also worn.

Males do not seem to feel inclined to ornament the nose, but many Fang
[304] women delight to do so. They pierce the triangular cartilage with a long slender bamboo pin: the pins sometimes project out three inches on either side of the nose. Very often a medium-sized porcupine quill is used as the ornament, in place of bamboo; it certainly looks better. Some women thus decorated look very repulsive. A female who is credited with considerable power as a medicine woman will almost invariably have the nose pierced and decorated. Ornaments are not worn on the lip or cheeks.

Body.—Men, women, and children wear necklaces of glass beads, the hoofs of very small antelope, and certain forest beans, are strung and worn around the neck. Bristles from the tail of an elephant are used for the same purpose. When